



## **HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 6, 2008**

CONTACT: HFD Public Affairs, 713-495-7900

### **National Arson Awareness Week, Lighters are Not Toys**

The Houston Fire Department is reminding citizens that lighters are not toys, they are tools for adults as part of the annual Arson Awareness Week, May 4-10.

This year's theme of toylike, novelty lighters and the dangers they represent for children was named by the U.S. Fire Administration due to recent incidents throughout the U.S. and legislation in many states and cities regarding lighters and novelty lighters.

Today, May 6, 2008, a special proclamation will be presented at City Council at 1:30 p.m. recognizing this week as Arson Awareness Week, "Toylike Lighters: Playing with Fire".

A free fire safety night will be held at the Children's Museum of Houston, Thursday, May 8, 2008, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Both HFD and the Harris County Fire Marshal Office will have fun activities and the arson canine units giving demonstrations. Representatives from both departments' "FireStoppers Programs" will also be on hand for parents that have questions about children and fire.

The FireStopper's Program provides the proper education and any other needed intervention for each child that has played with or has set fires to stop the firesetting before it leads to further injury, death, homeless families or problems with the law. Firestoppers tries to turn the event of firesetting into a positive opportunity for education and assistance. Participation in FireStoppers does not create a criminal record on the child.

Concerned parents, teachers, members of social services and the Houston Fire Department all refer youths to try to cease their firesetting behavior. This free program is for children 2 to 17 years of age.

Parents concerned that they may be judged as poor parents or seen as over-reacting, do not need to worry because the purpose of the program is to provide education for the child and family's safety. Call (713)495-7927 or email [elizabeth.ferrer@cityofhouston.net](mailto:elizabeth.ferrer@cityofhouston.net) for more information or to refer a child.

*HFD FireStopper's Program Director Elizabeth Ferrer may be contacted at 713-495-7927 for media interviews.*